



News Release

Comptroller Brooke E. Lierman Joins Urban Institute to Discuss Strategies for Increasing Access to State-Level Tax Credits

New research addresses barriers to claiming tax benefits and boosting economic opportunity

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (December 3, 2025) — Maryland Comptroller Brooke Lierman joined Urban Institute President Sarah Rosen Wartell, U.S. Representative Steny Hoyer, policy experts, researchers, and community leaders **Tuesday** to discuss ways states can ensure that residents claim the tax credits they are entitled to under state law.

Tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) lift millions of U.S. households out of poverty each year and have been shown to increase economic mobility. Maryland is one of the 30 states that have enacted their own state-level EITCs or CTCs. Maryland has expanded eligibility beyond the federal EITC to include young adults without children and taxpayers who file using Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs). However, navigating the process to claim these credits remains complex, especially for low-income and marginalized communities.

Wednesday's event is the culmination of a 14-month research collaboration between the Comptroller of Maryland and the Urban Institute, aimed at understanding who is missing out on the tax credits and why, with the long-term goal of increasing access to Maryland's largest income tax credits.

"A tax credit that exists only on paper and not in your pocket does nothing to help families support themselves. We are dedicated to ensuring every Marylander who has earned the EITC can access it to help them build a more financially secure future. keep more of the money they earn and build a more prosperous future," **Comptroller Lierman** shared. "Tax credits are one of the most important tools we have in building the middle class and tackling affordability challenges that make basic necessities more expensive for all of us. I look forward to continuing this important work with champions at the state, federal, and local level, as well as our partners at Urban and in the nonprofit space to bridge the gap between eligibility and claiming those credits."

The event featured findings from the Urban Institute's mixed-methods research project, co-led by Luisa Godinez-Puig and Aravind Boddupalli, which explored two central questions:

1. What barriers prevent eligible Marylanders from accessing state tax benefits?
2. What outreach, engagement, and tax filing supports are most effective in increasing uptake?

The project findings will inform the Comptroller's outreach efforts during the 2026 tax filings season and the second round of its Earned It campaign collaboration with the Moore-Miller Administration. The campaign's first iteration during the 2025 tax filing season coincided with an increase in uptake of the state EITC and CTC during that period.

In the 2023 tax season alone, an estimated 97,000 eligible Maryland filers did not claim the state EITC. Research suggests that this was largely due to lack of awareness, tax filing barriers (e.g., cost, complexity, fear), or negative past experiences with tax preparation services.

Research by the Urban Institute identified key barriers to access and outlined effective strategies to boost uptake, including:

- Year-round outreach — not just during tax season.
- Multi-channel communication (mailers, social media, local news, in-person events).
- Multilingual materials to reach diverse communities.
- Partnerships with trusted messengers like nonprofits and community leaders.
- Expanded access to free tax preparation services.

"Urban Institute researchers, in collaboration with the Comptroller of Maryland, worked to determine where and why Marylanders may be missing out on the state's largest income tax credits for which they are eligible, particularly the state's earned income tax credit and child tax credit," Ms. Wartell shared. "With our findings and strategy recommendations, Maryland's leaders, and other state and local leaders nationwide, can ensure that everyone can access tax credits, especially those who need them most."

Research funding was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, T. Rowe Price Foundation, Greater Washington Community Foundation, and the Abell Foundation.

Speakers also discussed promising strategies for bridging the gap between policy and practice, including community-based outreach, multilingual support, and simplified filing tools.

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Helping Maryland Connect Underserved Residents to Crucial State Tax Credits

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